

Sara Clapp Class of 1930 ***Ephrata Alumni Association Noted Alumni***



Though unable to personally attend Ephrata High School for three and a half years, Sara Clapp was able to earn a four-year scholastic average of 96.5 percent. She was honored for her diligence in studying by being named the class of 1930's valedictorian.

Sara won first place in all of the essay contests she entered as a student. At the time she had a lot to consider and write about due to the fall of the United States' 1929 stock market.

She was the only member of her class who completed four years of studying Latin, a necessary staple of a good education in the 1920s.

Besides Sara's regular studies she worked at the town library, arranging and classifying books.

After graduating from Ephrata High School, Sara:

- Entered Whitworth College, majoring in library work which led her to becoming the first librarian to be appointed by the City of Ephrata in 1941.
- Began holding Children's Story Hours at 2:30 pm each Thursday at the city library in hopes of reaching young people. Because of this, the library's usage grew and the library acquired many faithful members.
- Was granted a leave of absence from the library in 1943 to attend the University of Washington, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in library science and becoming the only certified librarian in Grant County.
- Oversaw the 1945 movement of the pioneer residence which was being used as the library. Once it was located next to the Lincoln School, the library became a popular after-school stop. (Location is currently the parking lot for Ephrata High School.)
- Worked tirelessly as the head librarian to advance book circulation and story hour attendance when the new \$86,500 library opened in 1956. (Located at First and D St SW but later opened at current location.)
- Greatly impacted the students of Ephrata by inspiring them to expand their horizons through reading. She had an endearing demeanor which attracted many to seek out her company.

Sara Clapp 1912 - 2008



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: FORESTINE PADGITT, VERA SMITH, LOUIS DILLON, SARA CLAPP, LAVERNE MCDONALD, MARY ROSE WILEY, GLADYS VICKREY, THELMA NOBLE, DELMER WILSON, LOUISE GIBBONS, JOHN WHITE, MABEL PARKER, VIOLET PLATT.

Sara Clapp

Article in October 2013 Tigerville Newsletter

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“Has Four Year Honor”. This is the headline in June 1930 announcing the successful graduation of Miss Sara Clapp. Miss Clapp graduated from Ephrata High School with a four-year scholastic standing averaging 96.5 percent and was named the valedictorian of the EHS class of 1930. She was credited with an outstanding record. For three and one-half years she was unable to attend school, yet she finished at the head of her class. During her high school course, she won first in all the essay contests she entered. She was the only member of her class who had four years of Latin to her credit. Besides her regular studies, she had for three years worked in the library doing considerable towards arranging and classifying books. Miss Clapp entered Whitworth College where she majored in library work. She is the daughter of Attorney and Mrs. William Clapp. [Grant County Journal news release]

This was the beginning of the story of Sara Clapp and her contribution to the Ephrata Public Library. In her role of city librarian Sara, as she was fondly remembered, was a loyal helper for

both youthful and adult patrons of the library beginning in the early 1940s; the success of the local library program was largely due to her faithful guidance.

Ephrata's city library was established in the early 1930s by members of a Sunday school class at the Community Methodist Church. The youngsters earned money to purchase and paint shelves for the library and collected books from about town. They took turns serving as the librarian until 1937 when Vesta Bush became the librarian. In 1939 funds were appropriated by the city of Ephrata to keep the church-located library open.

After the retirement of Librarian Bush in 1941, Sara, who had graduated from college and had taken a course in cataloging of books at Whitworth College, became the first librarian appointed by the city. The library books had not been catalogued and this became Sara's first task.

Hoping to reach the young people Sara had shelves built for the children's books and then brought in furniture from the primary classroom at the church so the children could have their own department. At this time, she began holding Children's Story Hours.

In 1943 Sara was granted a leave of absence from the library so she could enroll in an advanced study course in library science at the University of Washington. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in library science from her studies.

When Sara returned to Ephrata from the University in 1944 to resume librarian duties, she became the only certified librarian in Grant County. She found that the library had been moved by the city from the church to the former Burgan house, a pioneer residence located on the corner of "B" (Basin) Street and First S.W. She was happy to discover that the new site consisted of a children's room, a "stack" room (to keep the duplicate copies of some books and some of the less popular books), reading table and chairs in the main room, and a pleasant, home-like atmosphere throughout. The reference books were placed near the reading table and the Pacific Northwest collection had a corner bookcase to itself. She set Thursday afternoons at 2:30 pm as time for the story hour.

In 1945 the Burgan building was donated to the city. Arrangements were made with the Ephrata School Board to move it to "C" Street N.W. next to the Lincoln School. The building was completely renovated at an expense of only \$1,000 to the city. Labor, materials, and money were donated by the citizens. This location provided easy access for students attending the nearby-by schools. The library was a popular after-school stop.

In 1956 citizens of Ephrata voted a bond issue of \$86,500 for a new library building at First and "D" Street S.W. On December 16, 1957 this building, the first building in Grant County built specifically for a library, opened with Sara as the head librarian. A year after opening the much larger library building the book circulation nearly tripled. Twice-weekly story hours doubled in attendance. Citizens showed their appreciation of the new building by taking advantage of the library's superior management and the friendly attitude of the librarian Miss Sara Clapp.

Sara Clapp greatly impacted the students of the Ephrata School District by inspiring them to expand their horizons through reading. She had an endearing demeanor which attracted many young people to seek out her company.

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